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Message Text

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EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON
JERUSALEM FOR USDEL

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV XF US EG IS
SUBJ: ATHERTON/LEWIS MEETING WITH PM BEGIN -- SAT., JAN 21 -- 8:30 PM

REF.: JERUSALEM 197

1. FOLLOWING IS A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE TWO-HOUR MEETING AMBASSADOR LEWIS AND I HELD LAST NIGHT WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN AND ATTORNEY GENERAL BARAK. DAYAN'S ASSISTANT, ELLIE
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RUBINSTEIN AND DCM VIETS WERE ALSO PRESENT. SEE JERUSALEM 197 FOR SUMMARY REPORT OF CONVERSATION.

2. BEGIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE LISTENING TO EARLY RADIO REPORTS OF THE SADAT SPEECH (WHICH WAS STILL IN PROGRESS) AS WE WERE USHERED INTO THE PRIME MINISTER'S LIVING ROOM. TO OUR RELIEF BEGIN PROMPTLY SAID THAT

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BEFORE REACTING TO THE SPEECH HE WOULD WANT TO STUDY
AND ANALYZE IT CAREFULLY. AFTER A BRIEF EXCHANGE
ABOUT YOUR WHEREABOUTS AND SOME FRIENDLY JESTING OVER
SAM LEWIS' 1 AM SATURDAY MORNING PHONE CALL TO DAYAN
TO GIVE HIM A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON YOUR MEETING WITH
SADAT, WE QUICKLY GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS.

3. I TOLD BEGIN YOU HAD BEEN ALONE WITH SADAT FOR
ABOUT TWO HOURS AND THAT THE ACCOUNT I WAS ABOUT TO
GIVE HIM WAS BASED ON YOUR RECOUNTING OF THE CON-
VERSATION TO ME. I STRESSED THAT YOU HAD ASKED THAT
I CONVEY TO HIM THE FULL FLAVOR AND DETAILS OF THE
MEETING. NOTING THAT AT THE OUTSET OF THE MEETING
YOU HAD FOUND SADAT IN A MOOD BORDERING ON ANGER, I
SAID THAT WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO RELATE TO HIM MIGHT
MAKE HIM, TOO, ANGRY. BUT WE THOUGHT IT NECESSARY THAT HE
BE FULLY COGNIZANT OF SADAT'S MOOD AND PERCEPTIONS, AND OF
THE PROBLEMS AND IRRITANTS RELATING TO EVENTS OF THE
LAST SEVERAL WEEKS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY PREOCCUPYING
HIM. I THEN GAVE BEGIN A DETAILED REPORT TO WHICH
HE LISTENED WITH GREAT CARE AND ATTENTION.

4. BEGIN INTERRUPTED MY LENGTHY PRESENTATION ONLY
ONCE TO SEEK CLARIFICATION ON WHETHER SADAT THOUGHT
THAT HE HAD CONCEDED TO THE PHRASE "A JUST SOLUTION
OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM" IN PARAGRAPH THREE OF
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THE PROPOSED DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. SINCE I
HAVE REPORTED THE ESSENTIALS OF THIS PORTION OF
THE CONVERSATION IN PARAS. 6 AND 7 OF REFTEL, I AM
NOT REPEATING THEM HERE.

5. AT THE CONCLUSION OF MY REPORT I SAID YOU HAD
ASKED ME TO EXPRESS YOUR STRONG HOPE THAT BEGIN WOULD
AGREE:

A. TO SEND WEIZMAN BACK TO THE CAIRO TALKS SINCE
IT WAS THE ONE VENUE FOR NOW WHERE A DIRECT DIALOGUE COULD
BE CONTINUED.
B. TO PUT ASIDE FOR THE TIME BEING DISCUSSIONS
OF THE SINAI SETTLEMENTS ISSUE IN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE
AND TO FOCUS ON OTHER QUESTIONS SUCH AS BUFFER ZONES,
DEPLOYMENTS, AIR FIELDS, ETC. I SAID IT IS CLEAR THAT
SADAT AT THIS STAGE IS NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS FURTHER
THE MATTER OF SINAI SETTLEMENTS.
C. TO AVOID ANY NEW SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY OF ANY
KIND IN THE SINAI.

6. BEGIN THANKED ME WARMLY FOR THE "IMPORTANT

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INFORMATION" YOU HAD ASKED BE CONVEYED TO HIM.
HE SAID HE WISHED TO RESPOND TO SEVERAL POINTS.
FIRST, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY "WHAT IS THE CHARACTER
OF THIS MAN SADAT?". HE THOUGHT IT CRITICAL TO SEEK
AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION SINCE SADAT IS ONE OF THE
DECISIVE FACTORS IN THE SITUATION. BEGIN SAID THAT
DURING SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM HE HAD TALKED
WITH HIM ALONE MORE THAN TWO HOURS. SADAT'S LAST
WORDS WERE "YOU ARE MY FRIEND". BEGIN RELATED HOW
SUBSEQUENTLY HE HAD TOLD YADIN AND SOME OF HIS OTHER
ASSOCIATES "MY FRIENDS, HE IS A CURIOUS MAN. HE
CAN DO GOOD THINGS...OR OTHERWISE." IN RETROSPECT
THIS APPEARED TO HIM TO BE AN APT DESCRIPTION OF SADAT.

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7. THE PRIME MINISTER THEN DISCURSED AT LENGTH ON
WHAT SEEMED TO HIM TO BE A MARKED LACK OF STABILITY
IN SADAT'S RECENT PERFORMANCE. HE WAS ESPECIALLY
CONCERNED OVER SADAT'S PENCHANT FOR MAKING VERBAL
AGREEMENTS AND THEN LATER, UPON ADVICE OF HIS
ADVISERS, REVERSING HIMSELF. HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE
THE DEMILITARIZATION OF SINAI. IN JERUSALEM SADAT
HAD AGREED ON THE SPOT NOT TO PERMIT ANY EGYPTIAN
FORCES EAST OF THE SINAI PASSES. BEGIN HAD BEEN
ECSTATIC OVER THE STATESMANSHIP SADAT HAD DEMONSTRATED
IN REACHING THIS DECISION. AND IN ISMAILIA WHEN
THE SUBJECT CAME UP SADAT HAD SAID NOTHING TO INDICATE
ANY CHANGE OF MIND. NOR 48 HOURS LATER WHEN THE
ISRAELIS HAD COMMUNICATED TO THE GOE THROUGH OUR
EMBASSIES THE ISRAELI PLAN WHICH STARTED "BASED ON
PROMISES MADE IN JERUSALEM", ONCE AGAIN NOT A WORD
HAD BEEN SAID. IT WAS ONLY WHEN WEIZMAN AND GAMASY
FIRST MET IN GIANACLIS AND GAMASY HANDED OVER A
COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PLAN THAT BEGIN HAD REALIZED
SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG. HE QUOTED WEIZMAN AS HAVING
REMINDED SADAT OF HIS COMMITMENT TO BEGIN IN JERUSALEM
AND HOW GAMASY HAD INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT SADAT WAS
NOT A MILITARY MAN AND THEREFORE HIS COMMITMENTS ON
THE ISSUE WERE NOT RELEVANT. BEGIN SAID THIS EPISODE
HAD BADLY SHAKEN HIS FAITH IN SADAT'S STEADFASTNESS.

8. HE CONTINUED HIS CATALOGUE OF SADAT'S CAPRICIOUS
ACTS BY RELATING VARIOUS COMMENTS SADAT HAD MADE WHICH
HE HAD INTERPRETED AS IMPLYING BLESSING TO HIS PLAN
FOR RETENTION OF SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI. HE SAID
THROUGHOUT HIS TALKS WITH SADAT BOTH IN JERUSALEM AND
ISMAILIA NOT ONCE HAD SADAT UTTERED ONE WORD OF
CAUTION OR CRITICISM AGAINST THE MAINTENANCE OF

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ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI. IN FAIRNESS,
HE SAID, SADAT HAD STATED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
ISMAILIA MEETING THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN AREAS OF
DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES, AND PERHAPS IN RETRO-
SPECT HE HAD MEANT SETTLEMENTS AS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS.
BUT THE FACT REMAINED THAT AT NO TIME HAD SADAT MADE
SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE ISSUE NOR HAD HE "SAID ONE
WORD OF REJECTION".

9. BEGIN THEN TURNED TO THE DEVELOPMENTS LEADING UP
TO SADAT'S WITHDRAWAL OF THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION FROM
THE JERUSALEM POLITICAL TALKS. HE SAID THAT FONMIN
KAMEL HAD CONFESSED TO HIM HIS TOTAL SURPRISE OVER
SADAT'S DECISION DURING HIS FAREWELL CALL. BEGIN
SAID KAMEL HAD MADE CLEAR DURING THEIR FINAL TALK
THAT IN THE EGYPTIAN VIEW THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE
SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN CONVENED IN JERUSALEM. IT WAS
AN ARM OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE AND, ACCORDING TO KAMEL,
SADAT NOW WAS INSISTING THAT ANY FURTHER TALKS BE IN
CAIRO. BEGIN RUEFULLY RECALLED THAT WHEN HE HAD
FIRST TOLD SAM LEWIS OF HIS PLAN TO PROPOSE THAT A
MILITARY COMMITTEE BE CONVENED IN CAIRO AND A
POLITICAL COMMITTEE IN JERUSALEM, SAM HAD OFFERED
THE PERSONAL OBSERVATION THAT HE DOUBTED IF SADAT
WOULD AGREE. IN RETROSPECT, BEGIN SAID, SAM HAD UNDER-
STOOD SADAT BETTER THAN HE. IT WAS CLEAR THAT SADAT
AND HIS ADVISERS HAD MISGIVINGS ABOUT SENDING A
DELEGATION TO JERUSALEM FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
EVEN SO, BEGIN FOUND SADAT'S DECISION TO RECALL HIS
DELEGATION TO BE "AN IRRATIONAL ACT". HE SAID SADAT, JUDGING
FROM PRELIMINARY REPORTS OF HIS PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY SPEECH,
WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT NOVEMBER 19 REPRESENTS
A NEW ERA IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY. THIS HAS LED HIM TO
BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL IS GOING TO GIVE IN ON WHATEVER
HE ASKS. OTHERWISE, THERE WILL BE NO PEACE. HE MUST
KNOW THAT ISRAEL CANNOT GO BACK EVERYWHERE TO THE

1967 LINES. HE HAD TOLD SADAT IN ISMAILIA THAT THIS
WOULD BE "ABSOLUTELY INCONCEIVABLE" AND THAT THE ISRAELIS
WERE NOT COMMITTED TO DO SO UNDER 242.

10. BEGIN SAID HE HAS CONCLUDED THAT "SADAT IS NOT A
RATIONAL MAN." HE IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF "LEARNED
ADVISERS" BECAUSE HE DOESN'T BOTHER TO STUDY THE DETAILS

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ON ANY ISSUE. MEMBERS OF THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION HAD
TOLD MFA LEGAL ADVISOR ROSENNE THAT THEY HAD TO "PROTECT
OUR PRESIDENT BECAUSE YOUR PRIME MINISTER IS A LAWYER
AND OURS IS NOT." BEGIN ASKED WHAT IS ONE TO CONCLUDE
FROM ALL OF THIS. ONE THING SEEMS CLEAR. SADAT IS
VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE REJECTIONIST FRONT. KAMEL HAD
TOLD HIM SO QUITE DIRECTLY PRIOR TO HIS RETURN TO
CAIRO. BEGIN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS BUT HE WAS AT A
LOSS TO KNOW WHAT ISRAEL COULD DO ABOUT IT. HE COULD
NOT "WOUND OUR PEOPLE" IN ORDER TO SAVE SADAT FROM
HIMSELF.

11. BEGIN THEN LAUNCHED INTO A LONG, REFLECTIVE AND
I THOUGHT QUITE TEMPERATE ANALYSIS OF THE WAR OF WORDS
WAGED BETWEEN CAIRO AND TEL AVIV IN RECENT DAYS.
PREDICTABLY, HE FEELS HE IS THE INJURED PARTY AND THAT
IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING PROVOCATIONS FROM SADAT AND
FROM THE EGYPTIAN PRESS, HE HAS BEEN REMARKABLY
RESTRAINED.

12. HAVING FINALLY PURGED HIMSELF OF THESE VARIOUS
CONCERNS HE TURNED TO THE THREE PROBLEMS I
HAD TOLD HIM YOU HOPED HE WOULD GIVE HIS AGREEMENT TO.
HE SAID HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD STUDY SADAT'S SPEECH VERY
CAREFULLY OVER NIGHT BEFORE TAKING ANY DECISION ON WHETHER TO
SEND WEIZMAN BACK TO CAIRO. HE DID NOT WISH TO GO INTO ANY
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DETAILS NOW, BUT HE WOULD TELEPHONE AMBASSADOR LEWIS AS
SOON AS THE CABINET MEETING ENDED AND INFORM HIM OF THE
DECISION. ON THE MATTER OF CONTINUING WORK ON THE DECLARATION
OF PRINCIPLES, HE SAID HE WOULD BRING THIS SUBJECT
BEFORE THE CABINET IN ITS MEETING TODAY (JAN 22).
BECAUSE THE CABINET HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT THE
ISRAELIS SHOULD NOT UNDERTAKE NEGOTIATIONS OUTSIDE
THE FRAMEWORK OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE, HE SAID
IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO GAIN NEW APPROVAL TO CONTINUE
NEGOTIATIONS USING OUR GOOD OFFICES.

13. ON THE MATTER OF SETTLEMENTS, HE SAID IT WAS NOT IN
ISRAEL'S INTEREST TO EXACERBATE THE SITUATION. HE
AGREED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO CALM THE ATMOSPHERE.
BUT HOW DOES ONE ACCOMPLISH THAT AFTER SADAT HAS JUST
SPOKEN FOR TWO HOURS MISINTERPRETING MUCH OF WHAT HE,
BEGIN, AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAS SAID AND DONE IN THE PAST
WEEKS. HE THOUGHT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A DEBATE IN THE
KNESSET ON SADAT'S SPEECH. SEVERAL MOTIONS TO THIS
EFFECT HAD ALREADY BEEN TABLED EVEN PRIOR TO THE SPEECH.
HE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A STATEMENT BEFORE WEDNESDAY IN
RESPONSE TO THESE MOTIONS. HE THOUGHT PROBABLY THIS

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WOULD TAKE PLACE ON MONDAY, TO BE FOLLOWED BY A FULL
DRESS DEBATE.

14. AT THIS POINT DAYAN INTERVENED FOR THE FIRST TIME.
HE ASKED WHICH ELEMENTS OF YOUR CONVERSATION WITH
SADAT SHOULD BE KEPT SECRET FROM THE CABINET. FOR
EXAMPLE, IF THE CABINET WERE TO BE APPRISED OF THE
POSSIBILITY OF BEGINNING WORK ON A DRAFT PEACE TREATY,
IN ALL LIKELIHOOD IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO REPORT
THIS TO THE KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.
INEVITABLY, NEWS OF THIS WOULD LEAK TO THE PRESS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FACT THAT SADAT IS PREPARED TO
GO FORWARD WITH MEETINGS OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE
IS NO LONGER SECRET. THEREFORE, HE ASSUMED WE HAD
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NO PROBLEM IN THE CABINET BEING FULLY BRIEFED ON
YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SADAT ON THIS MATTER. FINALLY,
HE ASKED HOW WE WOULD PREFER HANDLING THE SUBJECT
OF FURTHER NEGOTIATION ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.
I SAID I THOUGHT THAT, BEYOND REFERRING TO CONTINUATION OF
THE MILITARY COMMITTEE, IT BEST SIMPLY TO STICK FOR THE
MOMENT WITH A GENERAL FORMULATION TO THE EFFECT THAT
SADAT WISHES TO PROCEED WITH THE PEACE PROCESS.
DAYAN ASKED IF WE WOULD HAVE ANY OBJECTION IF THE
CABINET WERE TOLD THAT YOU ARE SUGGESTING THE COMPLETION OF
WORK ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND HAVE
VOLUNTEERED US GOOD OFFICES TO THIS END. SADAT
HAS NOT REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL AND THE GOI HOPES
THAT THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE. IN CONCURRED IN THIS
FORMULATION.

15. TURNING TO THE POSSIBILITY OF STARTING WORK ON
A DRAFT PEACE TREATY, BEGIN SAID HE FOUND THIS A
SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT. HE SUGGESTED THAT A SUB-
COMMITTEE OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE COULD BE
ESTABLISHED TO BEGIN WORK. HE ASKED IF WE HAD ANY
OBJECTION TO DISCUSSING THIS IN TODAY'S CABINET
SESSION. I SAID I THOUGHT IT WAS PREMATURE TO DISCUSS
THE SUBJECT IN ANY WAY BECAUSE OF THE HIGH RISK OF IT
BECOMING PUBLIC. I SAID SADAT HAD RAISED THE IDEA
WITH YOU IN THE MANNER OF "THINKING OUT LOUD" AND
THAT IT IN NO WAY REPRESENTED A FIRM PROPOSAL ON HIS
PART. IT SEEMED TO ME THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS SHOULD
FIRST BE THAT WE FINISH WORK ON THE DECLARATION. IF
WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS THERE MIGHT BE MORE
RECEPTIVITY ON SADAT'S PART TO FIND A MEANS TO RESUME
EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CONTACTS ON A PEACE TREATY. IN THE MEAN-
WHILE, IF THERE WERE PREMATURE PUBLICITY, IT MIGHT KILL THE
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IDEA SINCE IT COULD BE INTERPRETED BY SADAT'S CRITICS AS EVIDENCE THAT HE WAS BACKING DOWN FROM HIS SUSPENSION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE. I SAID THAT SADAT WHILE AGREEING IN PRINCIPLE TO CONTINUE WORK ON THE DECLARATION, HAD ALSO SAID HE WANTED TO REFLECT FURTHER ON THIS BEFORE TAKING A DECISION. BEGIN THAN AGREED THAT NEITHER TEXT OF DRAFT DECLARATION NOR IDEA OF WORKING ON A DRAFT TREATY WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN TODAY'S CABINET MEETING.

16. DAYAN AGAIN INTERVENED TO SAY HE HAD LISTENED TO THE DISCUSSION WITH GREAT INTEREST. IT LED HIM TO WONDER JUST WHERE WE WERE GOING AND HOW WE INTENDED TO GET THERE. IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR A REVIEW OF OUR GENERAL STRATEGY. FOR EXAMPLE, SADAT HAD SAID FROM THE OUTSET THAT IF WE COULD GET A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, THEN HUSSEIN WOULD JOIN THE TALKS. DOES THIS STILL STAND? PICKING UP ON SOME OF BEGIN'S EARLIER COMMENTS, HE SAID IT WAS BECOMING DIFFICULT TO KEEP UP WITH SADAT'S ERRATIC CHANGES IN MOOD AND POLICY. AT THE OUTSET, FOR EXAMPLE, SADAT HAD SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO DISCUSS THE SYRIAN FRONT. TUHAMI HAD MADE THIS VERY CLEAR WHEN DAYAN HAD GIVEN HIM THE FULL DETAILS OF THE BEGIN PLAN PRIOR TO THE ISMAILIA SUMMIT. NOW, SADAT IS SAYING THAT GOLAN COMES BEFORE SINAI. DAYAN FOUND ALL THIS VERY CONFUSING. I RESPONDED THAT SADAT HAD NOT MENTIONED SYRIA ONCE DURING HIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU. THUS, I COULD NOT GIVE HIM ANY DEFINITIVE ANSWER AS TO WHAT SADAT HAD IN MIND RELATING TO SYRIA.

17. AMBASSADOR LEWIS THEN TURNED THE SUBJECT BACK TO SINAI SETTLEMENTS AND OUR STRONG HOPE THAT NOTHING WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE COMING WEEKS TO INFLAME FURTHER THIS PROBLEM. IN COMMENTING ON BEGIN'S EARLIER REMARKS THAT NO ONCE HAD SADAT TOLD HIM HE COULD

NOT LIVE WITH ANY JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI, SAM SAID HE THOUGHT IT ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT SADAT HONESTLY BELIEVED AT THE BEGINNING THAT HE COULD WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT ON SETTLEMENTS. BUT AS THE PRESSURES ON SADAT INCREASED AND AS HE SAW MORE CLEARLY THE POLITICAL EFFECTS ON HIS POSITION, HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO CHANGE HIS COURSE. BEGIN INTERRUPTED TO RECALL

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THAT EZER HAD CALLED HIM FROM CAIRO AT THE BEHEST OF SADAT TO ASK WHETHER IN FACT ISRAEL HAD DECIDED TO CONSTRUCT NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI. THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, HAD BEEN NO. THE ONLY DECISION TAKEN HAD BEEN TO ENLARGE SOME OF THE SETTLEMENTS ALREADY IN BEING. BEGIN THEN WENT ON TO CASTIGATE THE ISRAELI PRESS FOR THE DISTORTED MANNER IN WHICH IT HAD HANDLED THIS VERY SENSITIVE SUBJECT. HE SAID A PRESS TRIBUNAL HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED AND HAD CONDEMNED CERTAIN MEMBERS OF ISRAELI TV FOR THEIR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN HANDLING THIS STORY. SAM POINTED OUT THAT WHATEVER THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THE PAST, THE ONE CLEAR THING NOW IS THAT THIS WAS A "TENDER BOIL" AND THAT ANY FURTHER ACTIVITY OR ANY FURTHER PUBLICITY WOULD RESULT IN GREATLY COMPLICATING THE ISSUE WITH SADAT. BEGIN REPEATED THAT HE IS NOT GOING TO ESTABLISH ANY NEW SETTLEMENTS. BUT HE ASKED, SOMEWHAT PLAINTIVELY, WHAT WAS WRONG WITH ENLARGING THE PRESENT ONES? THIS HAD BEEN NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BUCK UP THE MORALE OF THE SETTLERS. ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW THEY WOULD NOT BE LEFT IN A LURCH, ALL THE SAME THEY WERE VERY WORRIED. BUT, BEGIN CONTINUED, THERE WAS ONE THING WE SHOULD FULLY UNDERSTAND. THERE IS NO GOVERN-MENT IN ISRAEL THAT COULD SURVIVE A DECISION TO DIS-MANTLE THE SETTLEMENTS. IT WOULD PROMPTLY BE VOTED OUT OF OFFICE. I SAID THIS ONLY UNDERSCORES YOUR VIEW

THAT AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT THE MATTER SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED FURTHER IN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. BEGIN ANSWERED THAT THIS WAS ALSO CALLAGHAN'S VIEW. HE HAD WRITTEN HIM "LET'S PUT IT ON THE BACK BURNER" AND THAT PROBABLY WAS A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF WHERE IT OUGHT TO BE. DAYAN BROKE IN TO OBSERVE THAT WHILE THE MILITARY COMMITTEE CAN PERHAPS AVOID DISCUSSING THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE, IT CERTAINLY COULD NOT AVOID TALKING ABOUT SHARM-EL-SHEIK. AT THAT POINT ONE WOULD HAVE TO DISCUSS THE STATUS OF THE CIVILIANS LIVING THERE. THIS BROUGHT HIM BACK TO HIS BASIC PROBLEM WITH SADAT. IF YOU TALK TO HIM IN A BUSINESS-LIKE MANNER, IT DOESNT GET YOU ANYWHERE. AND IF YOU AVOID CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, THEN SADAT SUBSEQUENTLY SAYS THAT YOU NEVER MENTIONED THE MATTER AND THEREFORE HE DID WHAT HE FELT HE HAD TO. ALL THIS LEADS INEVITABLY TO A VICIOUS CIRCLE OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND CONFUSION.

18. THE PRIME MINISTER BROUGHT THE MEETING TO AN END BY STATING THAT HE WOULD RECOMMEND TO THE CABINET THAT ISRAEL SHOULD CONTINUE NEGOTIATING ON A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES USING AMERICAN GOOD OFFICES. TURNING TO

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DAYAN, HE ASKED IF HE CONCURRED. DAYAN DID. BUT, BEGIN ENDED, "WE MUST NOT GIVE UP THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE BECAUSE OF THIS INDISCRIMINATE ATTEMPT TO DICTATE EVERYTHING TO US." IT WAS WHIMSICAL OF SADAT TO CALL HOME HIS FOREIGN MINISTER. IT WAS EQUALLY WHIMSICAL OF SADAT TO THINK THAT HE CAN VERBALLY ATTACK THE ISRAELIS AT ANY TIME HE PLEASES, AND THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE SUPPOSED TO REMAIN SILENT. ALL THE SAME, HE SAID, WE MUST PERSEVERE IN OUR EFFORTS TOWARD KEEPING THE PEACE PROCESS MOVING AHEAD. LEWIS UNQTE VANCE

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